

Message Text

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44

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-11 INR-11 LAB-06

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 AGR-20 HEW-08 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 L-03 NSC-07 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15

OMB-01 CIEP-03 DRC-01 STR-08 EUR-25 NIC-01 OPR-02

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R 251959Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 348

INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE GEORGETOWN 1718

1. STRIKE CALLED BY MANPOWER CITIZENS ASSOCIATION (MPCA) IN SUGAR INDUSTRY PRESENTLY APPEARS TO BE HAVING ONLY LIMITED EFFECT. MPCA PRESIDENT RICHARD ISHMAEL CALLED FOR NATIONWIDE WORK STOPPAGE BY GUYANA'S LARGEST SINGLE GROUP OF WORKERS FOLLOWING BREAK IN TALKS WITH GUYANA SUGAR PRODUCER'S ASSOCIATION (GSPA) ON INTERIM PAYMENT PENDING FINAL SETTLEMENT OF 1974 CONTRACT. MPCA IS DEMANDING TEN PERCENT INTERIM WAGE INCREASE RETROACTIVE TO JANUARY 1, 1974. GSPA ARGUES THAT IT IS UNABLE TO PAYMORE THAN THREE PERCENT BECAUSE OF GOVT DECISION THAT GSPA MUST PAY SPECIAL AUTUMN MONTHLY PRODUCTION BONUS OF TWO DAYS WAGES. TALKS BROKE DOWN ON SEPTEMBER 20TH AND ISHMAEL CALLED FOR STRIKE TO BEGIN SEPTEMBER 24TH.

2. ACCORDING TO GSPA INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS OFFICER, FIRST DAY OF STRIKE DIRECTLY AFFECTED PRODUCTION ON FIVE OF ELEVEN SUGAR ESTATES WITH FACTORIES. TODAY, SECOND DAY OF STRIKE, FACTORIES AT ONLY TWO ESTATES ARE SHUT DOWN AND OPERATIONS GENERALLY RETURNING TO NORMAL.

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3. MPCA PRESIDENT ISHMAEL TOLD EMBOFF THAT STRIKE IS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN GSPA WILL ADMIT. ISHMAEL CLAIMS THAT GSPA IS USING STRIKEBREAKERS AND MANAGEMENT PERSONNEL TO KEEP FIELD AND FACTORY OPERATIONS GOING. ACCORDING TO ISHMAEL, UNRECOGNIZED GUYANA AGRICULTURAL WORKERS UNION, LABOR ARM OF OPPOSITION PEOPLE'S PROGRESSIVE PARTY, IS ALSO HELPING TO BREAK STRIKE. HE BELIEVES, HOWEVER, THAT BY WEEKEND IMPACT OF STRIKE WILL BE FELT. IF STRIKE IS BROKEN, ISHMAEL WARNS HE WILL LEAVE GSPA AND GOVT TO BARGAIN WITH GAWU AND HE WILL REFUSE TO BE PART OF ANY AGREEMENT.

4. COMMENT: MPCA STRIKE APPEARS INEFFECTIVE AT THIS POINT EXCEPT ON THOSE FEW ESTATES WHICH ARE MPCA STRONGHOLDS. MPCA'S OWN ORGANIZATIONAL WEAKNESSES AND GAWU'S OPPOSITION TO STRIKE ARE MAJOR REASONS FOR FAILURE OF STRIKE TO GAIN MORE SUPPORT. IT IS NOT YET CLEAR WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF STRIKE COMPLETELY COLLAPSES. IF ISHMAEL FOLLOWS HIS THREAT NOT TO NEGOTIATE, GOVT AND GSPA MAY ACT INDEPENDENTLY TO PROVIDE INTERIM BENEFITS TO WORKERS.
KREBS

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